



2005 Minerals Yearbook

BURUNDI

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF BURUNDI

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Burundi, which is a small country in central Africa, was a producer of columbium (niobium) and tantalum ore, gold, tin ore, and tungsten ore, most of which, in 2005, was designated for export (table 1). The country also produced limestone, peat, and sand and gravel for domestic consumption. Additionally, Burundi has resources of cobalt, copper, feldspar, nickel, phosphate rock, platinum-group metals (PGM), quartzite, rare-earth elements, uranium, and vanadium. In 2005, manufacturing accounted for 8% of Burundi's gross domestic product; construction, 5%; and mining and energy, 1% (International Monetary Fund, 2006, p. 80).

In April 2005, Argosy Minerals Inc. of Australia withdrew the force majeure that it imposed at the Musongati nickel deposit in August 2004 because of political instability. Argosy resumed work on Musongati because of improvements in the security situation and the decision of the transitional Government to hold elections in 2005. The company was carrying out a feasibility study for an open pit mine at Musongati that would produce 45,000 metric tons per year (t/yr) of nickel, 7,500 t/yr of cobalt, and 2,500 t/yr of copper. Argosy also held the rights to the Nyabikere and the Waga nickel deposits (Mining Communication Ltd., 2005; Mining Review Africa, 2005).

Deposits of columbium (niobium) and tantalum were mined by Asyst Mines, Comptoirs Miniers de Burundi S.A., Hamza, and Habonimana. Production of columbite-tantalite ore and concentrate had decreased to 23,356 kilograms (kg) in 2004 from 24,382 kg in 2003 and 72,441 kg in 2002 because of low world market prices for tantalum oxide. In 2005, production increased to 42,592 kg; columbite-tantalite accounted for 5% of the value of Burundi's mineral production (Mining Communication Ltd., 2005; Damien Riragonya, Director General of Geology and Mines, Burundi Ministry of Energy and Mines, written commun., June 26, 2006).

National gold production increased to 3,905 kg in 2005 from 3,229 kg in 2004 and 415 kg in 2001 because of higher gold prices. Gold accounted for more than 90% of the reported value of Burundi's mineral production in 2005. Machanga Ltd. of Uganda was reported to be Burundi's leading producer of gold. Burundi Mining Corp. held the mining title to most of the country's primary gold occurrences, which were concentrated in Muyinga Province in northeastern Burundi (Mining Communication Ltd., 2005; Damien Riragonya, Director General of Geology and Mines, Burundi Ministry of Energy and Mines, written commun., June 26, 2006).

Artisanal miners mined small amounts of tin and tungsten. In 2005, tungsten production amounted to 94 metric tons (t), and tin, 4 t. Tin and tungsten accounted for 3% of the reported value of Burundi's mineral production (Damien Riragonya, Director General of Geology and Mines, Burundi Ministry of Energy and Mines, written commun., June 26, 2006).

The state-owned Office National de la Tourbe produced and distributed peat for domestic consumption. Resources of peat were estimated to be 36 million metric tons, most of which was located in the Akanyara Valley near Buyongwe (table 3).

Burundi has no identified resources of coal, natural gas, or petroleum. The country does not have a refinery for petroleum products; all petroleum demand was met through imports. Burundi's production of electricity decreased to 99.2 gigawatt-hours (GWh) in 2005 from 113.9 GWh in 2001. During the same period, imports increased to 71.2 GWh from 40.8 GWh, and consumption decreased to 119.8 GWh from 122.1 GWh. Hydroelectric power stations accounted for most of the country's electricity production (International Monetary Fund, 2006, p. 90).

Outlook

The outlook for columbium (niobium) and tantalum, gold, nickel, and tin depends heavily upon global market conditions and the resolution of political instability. Burundi's domestic market is limited by severe poverty. In spite of improvements in the security situation, conflict continued between the Government and the Forces Nationales de Liberation in the western part of the country in 2005. Demand for such local construction materials as clays, sand and gravel, and stone could increase because of reconstruction from the civil war (United Nations Integrated Regional Information Networks, 2005).

References Cited

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- Mining Review Africa, 2005, Burundi project's force majeure withdrawn: Mining Review Africa, no. 6, p. 2.
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TABLE 1
BURUNDI: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Columbium (niobium) and tantalum, ore and concentrate:						
Gross weight	kilograms	122,537	72,441	24,382	23,356	42,592
Nb content	do.	NA	NA	4,300	4,598 ^r	8,384
Ta content	do.	32,230	14,500	5,769	5,038 ^r	9,188
Gold, mine output, Au content	do.	415	483	2,855	3,229 ^r	3,905
Peat		6,816	6,977	4,580	4,643	4,700 ^e
Tin, mine output, Sn content		3	--	5	9 ^r	4
Tungsten, mine output, W content		--	--	13	8 ^r	94

^eEstimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits. ^rRevised. NA Not available. -- Zero.

¹Table includes data available through June 27, 2006.

TABLE 2
BURUNDI: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2005

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	Major operating companies	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity
Cement	Burundi Cement Plant ¹	Bujumbura	20,000.
Columbium (niobium) and tantalum	Asyst Mines, Comptoirs Miniers de Burundi S.A., Hamza, and Habonimana	Kayanza and Kirundo Provinces	NA.
Gold	Machanga Ltd.	NA	NA.
Do.	Burundi Mining Corp.	Masaka	18,300 ore processing.
Do.	kilograms do.	do.	33 gold.
Peat	Office National de la Tourbe	Highland Bogs	20,000.
Tin	Artisanal miners	Murehe	NA.
Tungsten	do.	do.	NA.

NA Not available.

¹Has not operated since 1996.

TABLE 3
BURUNDI: MINERAL RESOURCES IN 2005¹

Commodity	Deposit	Tonnage	Grade	Mineral content
Cobalt, copper, and nickel	Musongati	185 Mt	1.31% Ni; 0.08% Co; 0.17% Cu	2.4 Mt Ni; 150,000 t Co; 310,000 t Cu.
Do.	Nyabikere	46 Mt	1.45% Ni; 0.031% Co; 0.012% Cu	670,000 t Ni; 14,000 t Co; 5,500 t Cu.
Do.	Waga	35 Mt	1.38% Ni; 0.048% Co; 0.028% Cu	480,000 t Ni; 17,000 t Co; 9,800 t Cu.
Gold	Masaka	8 Mt	1.8 g/t	14 t.
Do.	Other deposits in Muyinga Province	NA	NA	45 t
Kaolin	Vyerwa	16 Mt	NA	NA.
Do.	Matongo	2.7 Mt	NA	NA.
Limestone	do.	1 Mt	NA	NA.
Peat	Akanyuru Valley	NA	NA	36 Mt.

NA Not available.

¹Abbreviations used in this table for commodities include the following: Co--cobalt; Cu--copper; and Ni--nickel. Abbreviations used in this table for units of measure include the following: g/t--grams per metric ton; Mt--million metric tons; and t--metric tons.

Sources: Burundi Ministry of Energy and Mines, 1991; Burundi mineral resources—An investment brochure: Bujumbura, Burundi, Burundi Ministry of Mines and Energy, 41 p.

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